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## Mayor Coleman Announces New Second Shift Partnership with Junior League of Saint Paul

Saint Paul Plays! to partner with City to provide programming in support of Saint Paul children

SAINT PAUL – Mayor Chris Coleman announced Tuesday that his Second Shift initiative has partnered with the Junior League of Saint Paul to develop *Saint Paul Plays!*, a program designed to support young people and encourage families to play. Volunteers will lead activities with families to teach parents and guardians to play with their children and develop a strong sense of ownership in their local recreation centers.

"This partnership will help us bring the Second Shift initiative to the next level. By educating caregivers about the importance of building strong bonds between adults and children, we can foster growth of strong families and help ensure all children in our community are on a path to success," Mayor Coleman said.

Play is critical to raising successful children and building happy families. Play stimulates brain growth, lays the foundation for learning, and provides key opportunities for positive social interaction. Furthermore, researchers have found that parents who felt their child was difficult or perceived they had no bond with their children were more likely to abuse them. Play provides the positive bonding experience required to prevent this abuse. Children also develop crucial social, language and vocabulary, problem solving, memory and cognitive skills through play.

Saint Paul Plays! brings the developmental value and connection-making power of play to Saint Paul families through a series of "play dates" in the community. Programming will begin at five Saint Paul Parks and Recreation centers: Arlington, Hancock, McDonough, Dayton's Bluff, and West Minnehaha. The Junior League has committed to bringing adult volunteers, food and games to each recreation center on a consistent basis over the next year.

The Junior League of Saint Paul is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. The League strives to strengthen the community by discovering unmet needs, developing innovative programs to fulfill those needs and then engaging members of the community to continue the programs once they are successfully established.

For more information on The Junior League, visit www.jlsp.org.

For more information on Mayor Coleman's Second Shift initiative, visit www.stpaul.gov/education.